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"For people with intellectual, developmental and other life-affecting disabilities."

To: The Education Committee

Hello, my name is Jamie Lazaroff and I am the Self Advocate Coordinator for the Arc Quinebaug Valley. I do want to comment on HB 6626. The bill as written is not clear as to what you would like to study regarding Special Education issues. To this point I would like to comment on a few issues that you may be looking at. By the way, it would be helpful to know the subject matter before coming all this way to testify (as I live over 50 miles away and am on a limited budget.)

It is well known that it costs more to out-place a student in Special Education out of district than keep them in their own school district. I know that it is not always possible to keep all students in their own school districts due to circumstances out of the control of the local system. However, it's the job of educators to identify a student's strengths and work with those strengths, in a regular education setting to the greatest degree possible. Book work and testing do not work well for many students with disabilities; finding ways to tap into their interests and strengths should be a priority of every public school teacher in our state.

In regards to inclusion, the state of Connecticut is doing a better job since I graduated High School in 1995. A self-contained classroom does not work as it leads to isolation and lower student expectations. Our students need to have high expectations placed on them like any student would have. Someone once said, if you raise the bar they will reach it if you lower the bar they will reach that as well.

Regarding seclusion and restraints, no one deserves to be in a time out room or scream room. If someone is having a bad day and screaming or yelling, they are trying to tell us something like a dog that barks. In most of these situations, educators need to listen and work with the students' strengths and interests

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jamie Lazaroff

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